

**CLAIMS**

1. Method of operating a node of a packet communication network, in particular an IP router, comprising the steps of:
  - 5 a) the node receiving a packet (10; 10a) from the network;
  - b) the node receiving information (13) independent of the protocols of OSI layers 5 to 7 of the packet and relating to at least one of the following characteristics:
    - the type of data transported in the packet,
    - 10 - the source of the data transported in the packet other than the network address of the source of the packet, and
    - the addressee of the data transported in the packet other than the network address of the source of the packet;
  - c) the node processing the packet (10; 10a) as a function of said description.
2. Method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the information received in the step b) is independent of the protocols of OSI layers 4 to 7 of the packet.
3. Method according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, characterized in that said information (13) is contained in the packet (10), the step b) comprising the node reading said information in the packet.
- 20 4. Method according to Claim 3, characterized in that said information (13) is contained in the header (11) conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of the packet (10), the step b) comprising the node reading said information in the header conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of the packet.
- 25 5. Method according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, characterized in that the packet (10a) contains an identifier (14) of said information, the step a) comprising the node reading the identifier.
- 30 6. Method according to Claim 5, characterized in that the identifier (14) is contained in the header (11) conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of the packet (10a), the step a) comprising the node reading the identifier in the header conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of the packet.
- 35 7. Method according to Claim 5 or Claim 6, characterized in that the step b) comprises the node receiving another packet (15a; 15b) from the

network, said other packet containing said information (13).

8. Method according to Claim 7, characterized in that said information (13) is contained in the header (11) conforming to the protocol of the OSI layer 3 of said other packet (15a), the step b) comprising the node reading said information in the header conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of said other packet.
9. Method according to Claim 7, characterized in that said information (13) is contained in the body (12) conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of said other packet (15b), the step b) comprising the node reading said information in the body conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of said other packet.
10. Method according to Claim 7, Claim 8 or Claim 9, characterized in that said other packet (15a; 15b) further contains the identifier (14), the step b) comprising the node reading the identifier in said other packet.
11. Method according to Claim 10, characterized in that the identifier (14) is contained in the header (11) conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of said other packet (15a; 15b), the step b) comprising the node reading the identifier in the header conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of said other packet.
12. Method according to Claim 10 or Claim 11, characterized in that it comprises, after the step b), a step of the node sending to a database (21) the identifier (14) and said information.
13. Method according to Claim 5 or Claim 6, characterized in that it comprises, after the step a) and before the step b), a step of the node interrogating a database (21) using the identifier (14).
14. Data packet (10) for a packet communication network comprising information independent of the protocols of the OSI layers 5 to 7 of the packets and relating to at least one of the following characteristics:
  - the type of data transported in the packet,
  - the source of the data transported in the packet other than the network address of the source of the packet, and
  - the addressee of the data transported in the packet other than the network address of the source of the packet.
15. Data packet according to Claim 14, characterized in that said information is independent of the protocols of OSI layers 4 to 7 of the

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packet.

16. Data packet according to Claim 14 or Claim 15, characterized in that said information is contained in the header (11) conforming to the protocol of OSI layer 3 of the packet.

- 5 17. Data packet according to Claim 16, characterized in that the packet conforms to the Internet Protocol, said information being contained in the Internet Protocol header.

18. Generator of packets as defined by any one of Claims 14 to 17.